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Message Text

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12
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 AGR-20 DRC-01 /104 W
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R 050537Z SEP 74
FM AMCONSUL KARACHI
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
SECSTATE WASHDC 8339
INFO AMCONSUL LAHORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EPAP, PK
SUBJECT: SIND ACHIEVES WHEAT PROCUREMENT TARGET FOR
1974 CROP YEAR

SUMMARY: ON AUG. 31 SIND CHIEF MINISTER JATOI ANNOUNCED THAT WHEAT PROCUREMENT TARGET FOR SIND, SET BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AT 400,000 TONS, HAD BEEN REACHED. IN PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT JATOI PRAISED MINISTER FOR FOOD SYED SHAH AND OFFICIALS OF SIND FOOD DEPARTMENT FOR "EXCELLENT RESULTS" OF PROCUREMENT CAMPAIGN, AND ZAMINDARS OF SIND FOR "COOPERATION AND WILLING SERVICE TO ADMINISTRATION." DESPITE POSSIBLY MORE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR OFFICIAL WHEAT PROCUREMENT IN SIND AT LOW CONTROLLED PRICE THAN IN PUNJAB, WE BELIEVE ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET IS MUCH TO CREDIT OF GOS. END SUMMARY.

1. GOS HAS MANAGED PROCURE TARGET LEVEL OF 400,000 TONS OF WHEAT IN SPITE OF LOW CONTROLLED PRICE OF RS. 25.50 PER MAUND, WHICH IS ROUGHLY HALF PRICE OF BETWEEN RS. 45 AND 55 PER MAUND PREVAILING ON FREE MARKET. PROCUREMENT LEVEL THIS YEAR IS ALSO ALMOST DOUBLE THE 204,270 TONS PROCURED AT GOP FIXED PRICE DURING
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CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF LAST YEAR.

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2. DURING TALK WITH GOS DIRECTOR FOR FOOD R.M. ISHAQUE AND OTHER PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH WHEAT PROCUREMENT, CONGENOFF WAS TOLD THAT SUCCESS OF THIS YEAR'S WHEAT PROCUREMENT CAMPAIGN WAS DUE TO STRENUOUS GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO PREVENT WHEAT SMUGGLING ACROSS BORDER TO INDIA AND TO DEDICATION TO WHEAT PROCUREMENT CAMPAIGN BY DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS OF WHEAT GROWING DISTRICTS AND THEIR SUBORDINATES. ISHAQUE REMARKED THAT DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR SUKKUR HAD BEEN FIRED LAST YEAR FOR LACK OF ZEAL IN WHEAT PROCUREMENT. WHEN ASKED WHY SIND HAD MANAGED TO MEET ITS QUOTA OF 400,000 WHILE PUNJAB HAD ONLY PROCURED 800,000 TONS OUT OF 1.8 MILLION TON WHEAT QUOTA, ISHAQUE SAID HE BELIEVED WHEAT QUOTA FOR PUNJAB HAD BEEN SET AT UNREALISTIC LEVEL.

3. INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS HERE CONFIRM THAT HIGH WHEAT PROCUREMENT LEVEL IN SIND THIS YEAR REACHED THROUGH STRENUOUS EFFORTS OF PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS DOWN TO TEHSIL LEVEL, WHICH PROBABLY BORDERED AT TIMES ON COERCION, WHILE SALE OF WHEAT TO GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR WAS A VOLUNTARY MATTER. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT GOOD SHOWING ON WHEAT PROCUREMENT IN SIND COMPARED TO PUNJAB IS DUE TO GREATER MEASURE OF CONTROL GOS CAN EXERT OVER SMALL NUMBER LARGE GROWERS HERE COMPARED WITH THE MANY SMALLER GROWERS IN PUNJAB, AND GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR UNAUTHORIZED SALE WHEAT AT FREE MARKET PRICES IN LARGER URBAN CENTERS OF PUNJAB. POSSIBILITY MAY ALSO BE GREATER OF CONTINUED SMUGGLING ACROSS PUNJAB BORDERS TO POPULATED AREAS OF EAST PUNJAB THAN FROM SIND, MOST OF WHICH BORDERS ON THAR DESERT, BUT THIS POINT MOOT.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY EXIST TO EXPLAIN RELATIVELY BETTER WHEAT COLLECTION LEVEL IN SIND COMPARED WITH PUNJAB, PERFORMANCE OF JATOI GOVERNMENT IN THIS AREA IS CERTAINLY CREDITABLE AND IS NO DOUBT APPRECIATED BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AS MEASURE IN KEEPING DOWN INFLATIONARY PRESSURES AND ALSO FOREIGN EXCHANGE OUTLAYS FOR IMPORTED WHEAT.
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